



HERODIAS IMMACULATA, *Gould.*

Spotless Egret.

Herodias immaculata, Gould in Proc. of Zool. Soc., 1846.

Yab-be-ruk, Aborigines of Port Essington.

White Crane of the Colonists.

THIS Spotless Egret, which is a beautiful representative of the *Herodias Garzetta* of Europe, is a native of the northern portion of Australia, and is extremely abundant in almost all parts of the Cobourg Peninsula, both on the open sea-beach and in the secluded parts of the harbour; it also occurs in all the neighbouring swamps and lakes. "On one occasion," says Mr. Gilbert, "while lying at anchor in Van Diemen's Gulf, about half a mile from an isolated rock, covered with a stunted plant growing from the crevices, I saw these birds repairing thither for the purpose of roosting in such numbers, that in a very short time the dark-coloured rock assumed an appearance of snowy whiteness, resembling in the distance, and particularly by moonlight, a pile of snow; at the same time I observed them in different parts of the harbour congregated in flocks, and when seen perched upon the branches overhanging the water, they greatly resembled a flock of Cockatoos; but although they are met with in such numbers it is by no means easy to procure specimens, for a more shy and wary bird is scarcely to be found.

"The stomach is membranous and the food consists of fish."

The sexes are precisely alike in plumage, and both are adorned with the long flowing plumes, which are thrown off in the winter season.

The entire plumage of a pure and snowy whiteness; irides yellow; upper mandible, half the lower mandible and apical dark purplish black; base of the latter dull yellowish grey; cere and orbits saffron-yellow; legs blackish grey; inner side and back of the tarsi, and the under surface of the feet siskin-green.

The Plate represents male and female in breeding plumage of the size of life.